

Journalism Standards Attachment A

Indiana's Academic Standards: High School Journalism Standards (2007)

The High School Journalism Standards were developed for a course in pre-collegiate journalism at the high school level. The standards provide solid grounding in journalistic writing, history, ethics, and communication skills. The national reviewers have praised the standards as "a set of academically rigorous standards that covers all aspects and areas of the field comprehensively and in depth" (Stotsky) and as "thorough, comprehensive, thoughtful and rigorous" (Dvorak).

Initial Draft - The initial draft was submitted for consideration to the Office of Program Development on November 29, 2005. It was developed by committees of journalism teachers, specialists, and journalistic writers as a project by the Indiana High School Press Association. It was reviewed and approved by Richard P. Johns, Executive Director, Quill and Scroll Society (the international honorary society for high school journalists), School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Iowa.

Internal Review - The initial draft was correlated by Kelly Linz Nelson, contract consultant from Bloomington, to the student journalism standards from Mississippi, the only journalism standards available that were written for students as a stand-alone document. It was noted that "Indiana has a very thorough approach to Journalism in comparison" (01.26.06). The draft was reviewed internally by content specialists and reformatted to fit the format used in the 2006 update of the English/language arts standards.

Draft I Public Review - The Proposed Journalism Standards document (Draft I) was posted for public review (March 20 - May 19, 2006) along with the public review for the proposed updated English/language arts standards. The standards consisted of four sets: journalism, publications and media, photojournalism, and broadcast journalism. As expected, a small number (27) reviewed the standards. However, they all had favorable comments. Most focused on the journalism set. Some did point out the need to address new media more thoroughly, as did another review sent in hard copy to the Office of Program Development.

National Review - The only national reviewer to comment on the journalism standards was Dr. Sandra Stotsky, who reviewed all the proposed English/language arts standards for Fordham Foundation. She briefly said that the standards presented a problem for her and made only a few suggestions about changes to the first section of the journalism standards. Because the entire set of English/language arts updated standards, K-12, and the new high school literature, composition, and speech standards needed to go through the revision process in the spring and summer of 2006, the journalism standards were put on hold until the fall when Dr. Stotsky's comments and those of the public review could be thoroughly addressed.

Draft II - In September 2006, a work team of journalism teachers and specialists met at the Department to revise Draft I by responding to the comments of the public reviewers and the comments of the Fordham reviewer. Draft II (journalism, mass media, school publications and media) was completed on September 13, 2006, went through a final review of interested work team members, and was sent to Dr. Stotsky for external review. The external review (10.20.07) was not favorable in large part because the three sets of standards were "structured in identical ways" with very few differences and there were "major concerns about content, standards, objectives, and their focus." Consequently, the work team decided to concentrate future efforts on developing a rigorous set of journalism standards only. It was felt that this would then provide the basis for the future development of standards for the other areas.

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Draft III - On November 10, 2006, a completely revised set of journalism standards that responded to each of the comments in the external review (10.20.07) was sent to Dr. Stotsky for review. The Texas Journalism Standards (2003) for teachers, not students, from the Texas State Board for Educator Certification provided a framework for the revision. Research into the college requirements at a dozen of the best schools of journalism around the country provided grounding for the content. Again, the draft went through a final review of interested work team members. Draft III had a particularly rigorous focus on journalistic writing processes and applications as requested in the October review. Dr. Stotsky's review (12.11.06) reflected approval of what had been done with the writing standards ("it is definitely moving in the right direction") but felt that there was "still more work to be done" because the other sections had "weak coverage of content." She also called, this time, for inclusion of examples to provide substantive content.

Draft IV - In the early spring of 2007, the work team reassembled to discuss the review of Draft III and the necessary revision work. It was decided at that time, to revise the journalism standards, since they had received positive comments about moving in the right direction, and then write two new sets--mass media and student publications--using the framework for the journalism set. The examples were removed as separate pieces and integrated within the standards themselves whenever possible. Draft IV was submitted to Dr. Stotsky on July 5, 2007. The review (7.11.07) of Draft IV came back with track changes. This time the comments said that the standards had "too much of a swing to general statements and expectations." Dr. Stotsky wanted examples added back in that would provide model content for students to "give a common background of understanding to all" in journalism classes.

Draft V - The work team decided again to concentrate only on the journalism standards and revised them to include substantive content in the form of examples from various anthologies housing prize-winning newspaper articles and various books by journalists about journalistic writings, ethics, and responsibilities. Interested work team members did a final review. Draft V (8.30.07) was submitted to Dr. Stotsky for external review. This time her review (8.31.07) of the draft was very positive and suggested a few minor wording changes. Dr. Jack Dvorak, Director, High School Journalism Institute, School of Journalism, Indiana University-Bloomington, who had been doing an ongoing review of the various drafts, also found Draft V praiseworthy. Draft V, with the edits suggested by Dr. Stotsky, is the FINAL DRAFT being presented to the Indiana State Board for approval on Wednesday, October 3, 2007.